

CH-53K



DESCRIPTION

The CH-53E Super Stallion is a three-engine, long-range, heavy-lift helicopter that is key to the assault support function of Marine Aviation. The current fleet of aircraft will reach the end of its fatigue life during this decade. A comprehensive upgrade is required to effectively meet Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) and joint war fighting requirements over the next 25 years.

The upgrade focuses on reliability, maintainability, cost of ownership, and performance. The CH-53K program, formerly known as the Heavy Lift Replacement Program (HLR), is the solution to maintaining a heavy-lift capability beyond the year 2025. The CH-53K is a derivative design of the existing CH-53E, remaining within the same shipboard footprint, and is critical to properly and cost-effectively supporting sea-based Expeditionary Maneuver Warfare (EMW) for the Marine Corps in the 21st century. The CH-53K will provide the Marine Corps with the ability to transport 27,000 LBS of Cargo out to 110 NM, providing twice the lift capability of the CH-53E under the same conditions. Major system improvements of the new build helicopter include: larger and more capable engines, expanded gross weight airframe, enhanced drive train, advanced composite rotor blades, modern interoperable cockpit, external and internal cargo handling systems, and increased survivability and force protection.

OPERATIONAL IMPACT

Maintainability and reliability enhancements of the CH-53K will significantly decrease recurring operating costs and radically improve capability over the current CH-53E, which is estimated to exceed \$27,000 cost per flight hour in 2015. The CH-53K will vastly improve the ability of the MAGTF and Joint Task Force (JTF) to project and sustain forces ashore from a sea-based center of operations in support of EMW, Ship to Objective Maneuver (STOM), and Distributed Operations (DO). The performance improvements will enable the vertical insertion of two combat-loaded Up-Armored High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWVs), one Light Armored Vehicle (LAV), or three 9,000-lb sustainment loads to three separate landing zones. The reliability, maintainability, and cost of ownership improvements will allow all of this to happen more efficiently and at a lower cost.

PROGRAM STATUS

The Operational Requirements Document completed joint staffing and was signed in 2004. The program achieved Milestone B in 2005, and the System Development and Demonstration (SDD) contract was award in Apr 2006. Initial Operational Capability will occur in 2015.

Procurement Profile:	FY 2007	FY 2008
Quantity:	0	0

Developer/Manufacturer:

CH-53E: Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation, Stratford, CT

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